
Stem Cell Awareness Day to Be Celebrated Around the Globe, Throughout California

Posted: October 5, 2010

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., October 5, 2010 — Tomorrow, October 6, researchers, patients, advocates, and students around the globe will celebrate Stem Cell Awareness Day, with special activities planned in five countries, six states in the U.S., seven academic and research institutions in California and in some 25 high school classrooms in the state.

Designed to be a grass roots activity with local organizers setting the tone for local events, Stem Cell Awareness Day has been fostered by the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the state stem cell agency, since the first celebration in 2008 organized in partnership with Monash University in Victoria, Australia. See all the activities scheduled for this year, as well as highlights from last year at http://www.stemcellday.com/SCAD_Events.

In a statement urging people to mark the day, CIRM president Dr. Alan Trounson said, "Stem cell science is advancing at as fast a pace as it is in large part because of pressure from grass roots campaigns that have created momentum to secure government funds for research and challenged researchers to think differently about the pace of bringing basic discoveries to the clinic. Stem Cell Awareness Day was created as a way to spread information and excitement about this field and to fertilize those grass roots to keep the pressure on everyone to further accelerate the field."

CIRM's principal activity for the day has been matching CIRM funded stem cell researchers with California high school teachers who have requested a guest lecture on Stem Cell Awareness Day. Around 25 groups of students will be visited by stem cell scientists this week.

CIRM also sponsored a Stem Cell Awareness Day poetry contest. Entries were welcome from anywhere in the world. The winners will be announced on Stem Cell Awareness Day and will receive a framed stem cell image of their choice from those on the CIRM Flickr site <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cirm>. The winning poems will also be posted on the Stem Cell Awareness Day and CIRM Websites and may be printed in the CIRM annual report.

In California, events are planned for University of California campuses in San Francisco, Irvine, San Diego, and Davis (Sacramento site), as well as the Parkinson's Institute in Palo Alto and Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla. Activities range from lectures and tours to hands-on experiences.

Other states with major activities include Wisconsin, Texas, New York, Minnesota and Michigan where the last day of the World Stem Cell Summit in Detroit will mark the day with a panel discussion on the impact of recent court decisions that have placed federal funding of embryonic stem cell research in limbo.

Countries with organized events include Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and South Africa.

About CIRM CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities

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